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MILLENNIAL STAR.

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"My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways" (PROVERBS 23: 26).

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THE FIRST VISION.

BY

JOSEPH SMITH THE PROPHET.

"I WAS born in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and five, on the twenty-third day of December, in the town of Sharon, Windsor county, State of Vermont. My Father, Joseph Smith, Senior, left the State of Vermont, and moved to Palmyra, Ontario (now Wayne) county, in the State of New York, when I was in my tenth year, or thereabouts. In about four years after my father's arrival in Palmyra, he moved with his family into Manchester, in the same county of Ontario.

* * * *

"Some time in the second year after our removal to Manchester, there was in the place where we lived an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became general among all the sects, in that region of country. Indeed, the whole district of country seemed affected by it, and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties, which created no small stir and division amongst the people, some crying, 'Lo, here!' and others 'Lo, there!' Some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Baptist.

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"I was at this time in my fifteenth year. My father's family was proselyted to the Presbyterian faith, and four of them joined that church, namely—my mother Lucy; my brothers Hyrum and Samuel Harrison; and my sister Sophronia.

"During this time of great excitement, my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness; but though my feelings were deep and often poignant, still I kept myself aloof from all these parties, though I attended their several meetings as often

as occasion would permit. In process of time my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect, and I felt some desire to be united with them; but so great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person young as I was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong.

"My mind at times was greatly excited, the cry and tumult were so great and incessant. The Presbyterians were most decided against the Baptists and Methodists, and used all the powers of either reason or sophistry to prove their errors, or, at least, to make the people think they were in error. On the other hand, the Baptists and Methodists in their turn were equally zealous in endeavoring to establish their own tenets and disprove all others.

"In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself, What is to be done? Who of all these priests are right; or are they all wrong together? If any of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?

"While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads: *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

"Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God I did; for how to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know; for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passage of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible.

"At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. I at length came to the determination to 'ask of God,' concluding that if he gave wisdom to them that lacked wisdom, and would give liberally, and not upbraid, I might venture.

"So, in accordance with this, my determination to ask of God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally.

"After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon

by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction.

"But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction—not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being—just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

"It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other—THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, HEAR HIM!

"My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right—and which I should join.

"I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that 'they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.'

"He again forbade me to join with any of them; and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time. When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven.

"Some few days after I had this vision, I happened to be in company with one of the Methodist preachers, who was very active in the before mentioned religious excitement; and, conversing with him on the subject of religion, I took occasion to give him an account of the vision which I had had. I was greatly surprised at his behavior: he treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying, it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that there would never be any more of them.

"I soon found, however, that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among the professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution which continued to

increase; and though I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects—all united to persecute me.

* * * *

"However, it was nevertheless a fact that I had beheld a vision. I have thought since, that I felt much like Paul, when he made his defense before King Agrippa, and related the account of the vision he had when he saw a light, and heard a voice; but still there were but few who believed in him; some said he was dishonest, others said he was mad; and he was ridiculed and reviled. But all this did not destroy the reality of the vision. He had seen a vision, he knew he had, and all the persecution under heaven could not make it otherwise; and though they should persecute him unto death, yet he knew, and would know to his latest breath, that he had both seen a light, and heard a voice speaking unto him, and all the world could not make him think or believe otherwise.

"So it was with me. I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision, and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it, at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation.

"I had now got my mind satisfied so far as the sectarian world was concerned; that it was not my duty to join with any of them, but to continue as I was until further directed. I had found the testimony of James to be true, that a man who lacked wisdom might ask of God, and obtain, and not be upbraided."

RECONCILIATION.

ADMITTEDLY no more comprehensive truth underlies the teachings of the New Testament than that salvation is made possible for mankind only through the reconciliation of the world by the life and death of our Lord. What do we understand then by the words "reconciliation of the world," and in what way did Christ's life bring about this return of harmony and accord?

Reconciliation is a word that implies a restoration of enmity to

friendship, a change in one's former relations towards another; and so, when we read in Scripture that there has been a reconciliation effected by the death of Christ, we understand that mankind has been brought into a new relation to God thereby. It is practically another word for atonement.

It is noteworthy that this reconciliation is invariably spoken of in the New Testament as an act on the part of man to God and not of God to man. Almighty God is a changeless Being, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. One of His attributes is immutable love, consequently there could never have been any need for Him to be reconciled to His creatures. It was not God who had become alienated from man, but man from God. The Apostle Paul says, "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us unto Himself by Jesus Christ" (II. Cor. 5: 18). "We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. 5: 10). "To wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (II. Cor. 5: 19). Be ye reconciled to God" (II. Cor. 5: 20). "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death" (Col. 1: 21, 22).

The Apostle in the above texts seems to assert that the potential reconciliation of the world is a fact that has been already accomplished, while in the following one he implies that such a reconciliation had first to be effected if mankind were to be ultimately saved. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5: 10).

That such a reconciliation was necessary may be gathered from the records of sacred history in which we find that in the meridian of time mankind had become exceedingly corrupt. The world with all its allurements, attractions, ambitions, and honors had so engrossed the thoughts of men, and pleasure had become so much the great object of their lives, that evil had become mistaken for good and good for evil. Hypocrisy among the Jews, even in respect to their religious obligations, had called down upon them the strongest condemnation from the lips of the Lord himself; while the utter degeneracy of the Gentile nations may easily be imagined from the descriptions given by the Apostles in many of their writings. Everywhere men and women seem to have opened their hearts to the whisperings of the tempter, and to have been brought into such complete captivity to the great enemy of souls, that they had well nigh lost their moral freedom. Thus alienated from God, the only hope left for their salvation rested in their entire reconciliation to Him. The Scripture informs us that "of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage," and such was the unhappy condition of mankind until the Lord, at great self sacrifice, restored to them their freedom of both choice and action.

It was in order to avert their destruction that Almighty God, in love for his erring children, sent His well beloved Son into the world, so that in the flesh he might deliver them from their servile condition, restore to them their spiritual freedom, and thus open for them a way by which they might obtain their ultimate exaltation. In order however to secure any such end, it was necessary that first of all those powers that were holding the world in captivity should themselves be taken captive, and the prison doors, as it were, rolled back, reopening the road to spiritual freedom, and permitting all who would to come and buy without money and without price, and to take of the water of life freely; and it was the successful accomplishment of this mighty work that brought the world into that new relation to God that the apostle calls "reconciliation;" not that it brought every individual person at once into complete harmony with God, but by it the world of created beings was brought into a condition of such spiritual liberty, that all who desired to do so might freely turn to their Heavenly Father and reconcile themselves personally and consciously to Him by faith and obedience to those laws of divine order which include the great saving principles of the gospel of Christ; hence we find the Apostle earnestly urging those to whom he was writing to yield themselves to God's will. His appeal was,—"We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II. Cor. 5: 20).

The manner in which our Lord's life work and death sufficed to bring about this restoration of spiritual liberty to mankind was, as has been already suggested, by his taking upon himself man's nature, subjecting himself to all human temptations, and so coming into direct conflict as man with those great powers of evil that were holding the world in such complete subjection as to practically paralize all its liberty of choice. His whole life on earth was one continued struggle with the powers of darkness; and the history of that perfect life reveals the fact, that in each successive conflict he was invariably victorious in his efforts to rescue mankind from satanic thraldom. And thus, from one victorious encounter to another, the Captain of our salvation reached his final conquest over the powers of darkness and brought them into complete subjection, by personal submission to the law of death through which alone he could effectually redeem the world and bring to pass the resurrection and ultimate happines of man. This seems to have been the teaching of the Apostle when he wrote—"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil" (Heb. 2: 14).

In this way, then, it became possible for men, thus released from their condition of bondage, to personally reconcile themselves to God by obedience to the laws and principles of that gospel that

St. Paul calls "the power of God unto salvation to all who believe (and obey) it" (Rom. 1: 16).

"Earth that long in sin and pain,
Groaned in Satan's deadly chain,
Now to serve its God is free,
In the law of liberty."
(Hymns Ancient and Modern).

Mankind, once sold under sin, has for ever been delivered from spiritual subjugation by God's almighty arm, so that all who will may now confidently reach forth unto those things that are before, and press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3: 13, 14).

"Ah, Soul of mine awake! Canst thou not hear
The Savior's call in accents loud and clear?
Cease, then, to plod
The worldly path, thick strewn with sin and strife,
And enter on the joyous way to life
That leads to God."—I. HARTLEY.

R. M. B. T.

THE DIVINE ANSWER.

My soul's in doubt, amidst contending creeds;
Give thou to me,
O God, the wisdom that shall meet my needs!
Make known to me
The truth, I faint in tumults, words and war;
Reach thou to me a helping hand afar.

Enough to know that in thy word is found
The remedy:
That he who asks, in knowledge shall abound
Eternally.
Thy voice shall never such a one upbraid,
But in thy favor bask all unafraid.

I venture, then, thy presence to implore,
This lovely morn,
What'er the answer is for me in store,
Or danger borne!
Grant me my heart's desire: "Which church is right?"
Show me the way, and save me from the night!

I cry for help, when demon's powers alarm,
In dark despair;
'Tis then God's light is seen to shield from harm,
And in the air,
In glory, Father and the Son appear,
Commanding me the Savior Son to hear.

EDWARD H. ANDERSON.

THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 1920.

EDITORIAL:

KNOW YE THE LORD (VII).

In concluding this very incomplete review of certain scriptures, which discloses the personal ministry of the Almighty Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, and of the appearance to men of angels sent from the presence of God with messages of importance to them, we are brought to consider the revelations of the present dispensation, and at once discover a most significant and interesting fact, namely: that throughout the whole period of human history the divine manifestations of the personages of the Deity, and the authorized ministry of angels, have always been accompanied by more or less dramatic incidents in the conflict of adverse forces; a uniform solemn dignity of expression, revealing an exalted, definite purpose, with important consequences following.

This is not only true respecting those appearances referred to in the Bible and Book of Mormon and Pearl of Great Price, but equally true when further compared with like ministrations in modern times, as revealed in the Doctrine and Covenants, and recorded in the History of the Church.

To begin with, attention is called to The First Vision of Joseph Smith, as described and written by the Prophet himself, which we republish in this issue of the *Star*. We believe it is not possible that any fair, openminded person, seeking honestly to know, can read this simple narrative and not be impressed by its absolute truth. Such a reader can assuredly come by that impression, if he will ask our Heavenly Father for it in faith—the only way. Certainly no one having by faith obtained a knowledge of the Scriptural visitations being true, can fail to verify this most glorious and heavenly vision in like manner. They are of the same quality in every respect that would commend them to the credulity of sincere seekers for the truth, and who are willing to receive and abide by it. Indeed, for the portentous demand of the occasion, the opening of the dispensation of the fulness of times, this vision transcends all others in sublime majesty of appearance and authoritative utterance; instantly overthrowing the destructive power of the adversary and dispelling all darkness; while the light of the countenance of God shone forth in superlative brilliance as He became visible and pointed to his companion, and as his voice was heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear him!" Never before, so far as it is recorded, have the distinct personalities of the Father and the Son, appear-

ing together, been so intimately manifested. Glorious visions have been seen of the Almighty enthroned in heaven, with the Son seated by the Majesty on high, surrounded by concourses of angels worshiping and singing anthems of praise as a heavenly host; but nowhere else is it written that a human being has been visited and so directly instructed by the Father and Son appearing together, sweeping instantly away the delusions of ages, and revealing the truth concerning the Godhead and the designs of Deity respecting the salvation of the children of men.

It has been objected that the youth of Joseph Smith was a forbidding circumstance; that it is too much to ask men to believe that a vision, so far-reaching and comprehensive in significance to mankind, would be given to a child. The fact that God has not despised children nor failed to greatly distinguish them, as he has had need to call them to his service, has escaped the observation of such critics. Paul adjures Timothy: "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers. * * * Neglect not the gift that was given thee * * * by the laying on of hands" (I. Timothy 4: 12, 13).

God accepted the offering of Abel, the younger son, and exalted Joseph, next youngest of the sons of Israel. Of the eight mighty sons of Jesse, David, the youngest, was chosen to become king. "And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he" (I. Samuel 16: 12). The Prophet Samuel, to whom he gave this command, was himself consecrated in childhood to the service of God, and received his wonderful first vision at the age of twelve; and the Prophet Daniel was not much older when he was carried away captive to Babylon, and was made ready, by devotion to the laws of God, for the visions given him and power to interpret the dreams of the king. The Prophet Jeremiah declares that he was "but a child" when the Lord called him. John the Baptist was ordained in infancy by an angel of God, and baptized in his childhood (Doctrine and Covenants 84: 28). Of the sons of Lehi, it was Nephi, their younger brother, who received the visions of heaven, and suffered in life from the enmity of his elder brethren, yet established the race known as the Nephites. Mormon was called of God at fifteen. The consciousness of his divine ministry to the children of men came to Jesus when he was twelve years of age, and disputed with the doctors in the temple. He replied, when remonstrated with for tarrying behind his parents: "And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business" (St. Luke 2: 49).

After receiving his first vision, which was the annunciation of the dispensation of the fulness of times, Joseph Smith, the chosen of the Lord, to be his first apostle and Latter-day Prophet, was instructed, and in every way made fit and equal to the ministry required of him, by angels sent from the presence of God. On the night of the 21st of September, 1823, the most interesting

visitation of the angel revealing the Book of Mormon occurred. The Prophet describes his appearance and what he said, which indeed was repeated three times during the night and amplified, and again on the following morning: "While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor. He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen; nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. His hands were naked, and his arms also, a little above the wrist; so, also, were his feet naked, as were his legs, a little above the ankles. His head and neck were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing on but this robe, as it was open, so that I could see into his bosom. Not only was his robe exceedingly white, but his whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. The room was exceedingly light, but not so very bright as immediately around his person. When I first looked upon him, I was afraid; but the fear soon left me. He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people" (Pearl of Great Price, p. 88: 30-33).

This repeated vision of Moroni, so full of instruction, quotations from the Bible, and declaring the existence and place of deposit of the records, ended by commanding Joseph to go and tell his father about it. He did this, and his father said to him that it was of God, and for him to go and do as the angel had directed. He did so, and was able to identify the spot as soon as he reached the hill Cumorah, as he had seen it in the vision. He says: "On the west side of this hill, not far from the top, under a stone of considerable size, lay the plates, deposited in a stone box. This stone was thick and rounding in the middle on the upper side, and thinner towards the edges, so that the middle part of it was visible above the ground, but the edge all around was covered with earth. Having removed the earth, I obtained a lever, which I got fixed under the edge of the stone, and with a little exertion raised it up. I looked in, and there indeed did I behold the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate, as stated by the messenger. * * * I made an attempt to take them out, but was forbidden by the messenger, and was again informed that the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived, neither would it, until four years from that time; but he told me that I should come to that place precisely in one year from that time, and that he would there

meet with me, and that I should continue to do so until the time should come for obtaining the plates. Accordingly, as I had been commanded, I went at the end of each year, and at each time I found the messenger there, and received instruction and intelligence from him at each of our interviews, respecting what the Lord was going to do, and how and in what manner his kingdom was to be conducted in the last days. * * * At length the time arrived for obtaining the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate. On the twenty-second day of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, having gone as usual at the end of another year to the place where they were deposited, the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me with this charge: that I should be responsible for them; that if I should let them go carelessly, or through any neglect of mine, I should be cut off; but that if I would use all my endeavors to preserve them, until he, the messenger, should call for them, they should be protected" (Pearl of Great Price, p. 93: 52-54, 59).

During this long period of preparation, study and reflection, a period as long as the usual college course—Joseph, under the annual instruction of his heavenly teacher, qualified for the labor of translation; and the way was providentially opened for him to receive the needed assistance, in the hospitality of the Whitmer family, in the coming of Oliver Cowdery to be his scribe, and in the friendship of Martin Harris to furnish the means for the the publication of the Book of Mormon.

While engaged in the translation, several most important revelations were received by the Prophet in which the authority of the holy priesthood was restored to the earth, by the ministry of those who held it in former times, and were now sent as angels of God for that purpose. He says that while he and Oliver Cowdery were engaged upon the translation, "We on a certain day went into the woods to pray and inquire of the Lord respecting baptism for the remission of sins, that we found mentioned in the translation of the plates. While we were thus employed, praying and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying: Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness. * * * He commanded us to go and be baptized and gave us directions that I should baptize Oliver Cowdery, and that afterwards he should baptize me. Accordingly we went and were baptized. * * * The messenger who visited us on this occasion and conferred this Priesthood upon us, said that his name was John, the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament. * * * It was on the fifteenth

day of May, 1829, that we were ordained under the hand of this messenger and baptized" (Pearl of Great Price, p. 97: 68-72).

By the end of the month following, June, 1829, the Melchisedek priesthood was restored. Joseph says there came to him and Oliver, in the wilderness between Harmony and Colesville, on the Susquehanna river, Peter, James, and John, "declaring themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom, and of the dispensation of the fulness of times" (Doc. and Cov. 128: 20). And the Lord himself, in allusion to this visitation and to his own coming to partake of the Sacrament with His aeeepted servants, that have been on the earth, mentions Adam, Moroni and others; "and also with Peter and James and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles and special witnesses of my name" (Doc. and Cov. 27: 1).

Upon the restoration of the Priesthood to the earth, the following quotation, from a publie address delivered at Kanesville in the fall of 1848, upon his retnrn to the Church, by Oliver Cowdery, is most eomprehensive and interesting: He said: I was present with Joseph when an holy angel from God eame down from heaven and conferred on us, or restored, the lesser or Aaronie Priesthood, and said to us, at the same time, that it should remain upon the earth while the earth stands. I was also present with Joseph when the higher or Melchisedek Priesthood was conferred by holy angels from on high."

The Testimony of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris, was given, pursuant to the commandment of the Lord, and declares in great solemnity, in words that have never been changed nor denied nor disproved, "That we, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ have seen the plates whieh eontain this reeord * * * and we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for His voice hath deelared it unto us, wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. * * * and we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates and the engravings thereon" (Book of Mormon Prefaec; History of the Chureh, Vol. I., pp. 54-57).

The restoration of the keys of the gathering of Israel, of the gospel of Abraham, and of the work for the dead, was manifested in glorious visions to Joseph and Oliver in the Kirtland Temple, April 3rd, 1836: "The vail was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened. We saw the Lord standing upon the breast work of the pulpit, before us, and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold in color like amber" (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 110: 1, 2). "After this vision closed, the heavens were again opened unto ns, and Moses appeared before us and eommitted unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel. * * * Elias appeared and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abra-

ham, saying that in us and our seed, all generations after us should be blessed. * * * Another great and glorious vision burst upon us, for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us" (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 110: 11-13).

We shall conclude these references to the visions of the Prophet, by quoting from that most wonderful section of the Doctrine and Covenants known as the Vision, given to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, February 16th, 1832: "And while we meditated upon these things, the Lord touched the eyes of our understanding and they were opened, and the glory of the Lord shone round about; and we beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, and received of his fulness; and saw the holy angels, and they who are sanctified before his throne, worshiping God, and the Lamb, who worship him for ever and ever. And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony last of all, which we give of him, that he lives; for we saw him, even on the right hand of God, and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—that by him and through him, and of him the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 76: 19-24).

We have shown that a cursory review of the Bible, Book of Mormon, Pearl of Great of Price, with quotations from the History of Joseph Smith, reveals alike, in person, form, and character, but as distinct and separate Beings, the one and only true God and Jesus the Christ, the personage of the Holy Ghost, and the personality of the angels as the earthly servants of God, raised to immortality and still ministering to men, as they are, from time to time, sent forth from the presence of God.

From the Bible we have quoted this ministry to Adam and Eve, Cain, Noah, Abraham, Hagar, Abimeleck, Rebekah, Isaac, Jacob, Laban, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Gideon, Manoah and his wife, Samson, Samuel, David, Abiathar the priest, Nathan, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Job, Ezekiel, Daniel, Malachi and the lesser prophets, Enoch, Zacharias, Joseph and Mary, the mother of Jesus, Peter, James and John in the transfiguration, Mary Magdalene, the Twelve Apostles, Philip, the Apostle Paul, Ananias, Cornelius, Peter and John the Revelator.

There are many others that glorify the pages of the Old and New Testaments. From the Book of Mormon space has permitted but a brief culling of heavenly visions to the Brother of Jared, Ether, Lehi, Nephi, Laman, and Lemuel; the Savior's open visions to the Nephites, men, women, and children; to King Benjamin, Alma, and the sons of Mosiah, Samuel the Lamanite, the sons of Helaman; to Mormon and Moroni. The visions of Enoch, recorded in the Pearl of Great Price; and from the same sacred record, which includes the Writings of Joseph the Prophet, quotations have been made of the ministry of the personages of Deity, of holy

angels of God, and manifestations of the Holy Ghost to Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, Martin Harris, and Sidney Rigdon.

Is it possible to believe any part of all this disclosure and not the whole of it? No it is not. Any reasonable person cannot fail to observe the consistent harmony which raises to a high and holy plain of enlightened spiritual communication and fellowship, all these appearances and ministrations of the Heavenly beings, from God the Eternal Father, speaking to and walking with Adam, down to the angel Moroni instructing Joseph Smith. There is no darkness, nor intrigue nor deception about them. They reveal God, and do not make a mystery of godliness. They declare His universal fatherhood and love, and purpose to save his children if they will obey him, and keep his commandments, which are designed and are essential to guide the erring footsteps of mortal men in the path of righteousness that leads to immortality and eternal life.

J. F. W.

MINUTES OF THE IRISH CONFERENCE.

THE Irish semi-annual conference convened Sunday, April 4th, 1920, at Dublin. There were in attendance: President George Albert Smith, Elders Junius F. Wells and John E. Cottam, of the Liverpool office; President Frederick G. Day and Elder William H. Horlacher, of the Bristol conference; and President Benjamin R. Birchall, of the Irish conference.

At the morning session the Sacrament was administered by Brothers Fred. Baker and Charles Horlacher.

President Birchall welcomed all to conference. Spoke of the disturbed condition of Ireland to-day, and said that if people would only accept the gospel, there would be peace on earth and goodwill towards all men.

The Sunday-school children rendered an excellent program.

Brother and Sister Fred. Baker, who are leaving for Zion, bore their testimonies, and spoke of their happy connection with the Dublin branch.

President Smith expressed his great pleasure in meeting again the members of the Irish conference. Spoke on the resurrection, and explained the development of the spirit of man, emphasized the importance of Easter Sunday, endorsed the decorating of the stands with flowers for such an occasion, and thanked Sister Birchall for having done so on this occasion. He also thanked the Dublin saints for their splendid donation to assist the starving people of the Swiss and German mission, urged all to cultivate the Spirit of the Lord, not to get discouraged, but to work on for the Master and live the gospel in daily life.

At the afternoon session, President Birchall presented the

general authorities of the Church, the mission, and the conference, all of whom were unanimously sustained.

President Day spoke on the subject of apostasy, and bore a strong testimony to the restoration of the gospel in these the latter days. Said his missionary experiences had been the happiest time of his life.

Elder John E. Cottam said we had not met as a company of financiers to augment our incomes, but as people of God, to meditate on the gospel. Our God is not a tyrannical God, but one of love, and we all have our free agency to choose which way we will go. If love abounded in the hearts of all men, there would be no assassinations, nor would one man seek to rise at the expense of another's downfall. Exhorted all to be perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect.

Elder Junius F. Wells spoke very interestingly of early reminiscences of the Church, and of many of the Church authorities, and bore testimony that they were men of God. Urged the young people to respect their parents, and not speak of them as the "old man" or the "old woman." Referred to the hundredth anniversary of the first vision given to the Prophet Joseph. In that day the uninspired priests were divining for money and teaching for hire, but the Father said, "This is my beloved Son, hear him"; and instructions were given by the Lord and by angels sent from the presence of God. "Heaven is to serve intelligently. The glory of God is intelligence, and His spirit giveth light. You can only know God by the Spirit of God. Try and know and live by that Spirit, and you will find you are in possession of the same spirit by which God rules the universe."

At the evening session Elder William Horlacher was the first speaker; he stated the world needs calling to repentance, for these days in which we live are in fulfilment of scripture, and are the days preceeding the second coming of our Lord. The world does not appreciate the message of the gospel, but notwithstanding that, the power of God is on the earth to-day with all its gifts and blessings.

President Smith followed, and said we can get out of the gospel just what we put in it. He took up the subject of divine authority, adding that whenever the Lord had a Church on the earth He always had a prophet; but the Christian world had apostatized from the teachings of our Lord since 600 A.D. Dwelt at length on the general apostasy, then showed that authority was necessary to restore the gospel to the earth. He pointed out that the so-called Christians of to-day hold the belief that these things are not necessary for the salvation of mankind. Divine authority is necessary, for surely the Lord God will do nothing save that he revealeth himself to his servants the prophets. Spoke of the past and future wars, and said the future would be more terrible. He said that the dove of peace can hardly find a place to put its

foot on this earth, for it is rent asunder from end to end, sin and wickedness prevails, dissension and disorder have taken hold of the minds of men. In conclusion, President Smith emphasized the need of the authority of God to be re-established on the earth, and bore a powerful testimony to the restoration of the gospel, through the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Sister Nellie Youkstetter sang a solo, "Abide with me," which was much appreciated.

President Birchall the last speaker, continued on the same subject of authority, said there is only one true God, one Lord, one faith and one baptism, pointed out that other baptisms were not recognized of God, closed by thanking all who had contributed to the success of the meetings.

Monday, at 4:30 p. m. the Priesthood meeting was held. Instructions were given by President Smith, Elders Wells and Cottam and President Birchall.

After Priesthood meeting, a grand social was held, at which one hundred and twenty people were present. The social took the form of a farewell gathering in honor of Brother and Sister Baker and family, who leave on Tuesday, the 6th inst., for Zion. President Birchall presided and presented Brother and Sister Baker with a handsome case of cutlery, bearing a suitable inscription, on behalf of the members of the branch. Sister Baker was also presented with a lady's handbag by her Sunday-school scholars. One of the finest programs ever rendered in the Dublin branch was given by junior and senior classes, who had been beautifully trained by Sister Lena Youkstetter and George Baker. At 10 p.m. the audience joined in singing, "God be with you till we meet again," and benediction was pronounced by Elder Wells.

BENJAMIN R. BIRCHALL, Conference President.

FROM THE MISSION FIELD.

Change of Address.—The address of the Manchester conference is: Walter Roberts, 42 Freemantle Street, Edgeley, Stockport.

Baptisms.—A baptismal service was held at Ipswich, March 20th, 1920, when one soul was added to the fold of Christ. The new member was confirmed the following day. Elder Frank Alexander officiated in each instance.

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